United Nations

A/58/284

General Assembly

Distr.: General
14 August 2003
English
Original: French

Fifty-eighth session
Item 119 (a) of the provisional agenda*
Human rights questions: implementation of human rights instruments

United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

This report is submitted in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 36/151 and 57/200. The most recent information is contained in the report to the Commission on Human Rights (E/CN.4/2003/61 and Add.1). This report describes the recommendations adopted by the Board of Trustees of the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture at its twenty-second session and approved by the Secretary-General, for grants made to beneficiary organizations on the basis of contributions received between May 2002 and May 2003. These recommendations also have to do with fund-raising and cooperation with other United Nations bodies working on the question of torture and the United Nations presence in the field. The report analyses the trends noted over the past seven years in the various types of assistance offered by beneficiary organizations, as well as their impact on victims. The estimated financing needs of the Fund in 2004 are also indicated.

* A/58/150.

03-47178 (E) 180903 230903

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I. Introduction

A. Submission of the report

1. This annual report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly, drafted on 24 July 2003, was prepared in accordance with the arrangements approved by the Assembly in resolution 36/151 of 16 December 1981, by which it established the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture. It essentially presents the recommendations adopted by the Fund's Board of Trustees at its twenty-second session (Geneva, 12 to 28 May 2003), which were approved on 6 June 2003 by the Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights on behalf of the Secretary-General.

B. Mandate of the Fund

2. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 36/151 of 16 December 1981, the Fund receives voluntary contributions from Governments, non-governmental organizations and individuals, which it distributes through established channels of assistance, as humanitarian, legal and financial assistance to torture victims and their relatives. In accordance with the practice established by the Board of Trustees beginning in 1982, the Fund provides grants to non-governmental organizations that submit projects involving medical, psychological, social, economic, legal, humanitarian or other forms of assistance to torture victims and their relatives.

C. Composition of the Fund's Board of Trustees

3. The Secretary-General administers the Fund through the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights with the advice of the Fund's Board of Trustees. The Chairman of the Board is Mr. Jaap Walkate; the other members are Mr. Ribot Hatano, Ms. Elizabeth Odio-Benito, Mr. Ivan Tosevski and Mr. Amos Wako.

D. Grant cycle

4. The following description of the grant cycle briefly explains the operation of the Fund. Grant requests should be submitted no later than 30 November each year for consideration by the secretariat of the Fund, which decides whether they are admissible under the Fund's guidelines. Admissible grant requests are reviewed by the Board at its annual session in May. The Board's recommendations are examined by the Fund's secretariat to ensure that they are in compliance with the relevant United Nations rules, then submitted for approval on behalf of the Secretary-General to the High Commissioner. The applicants are informed in writing, in July, of the decisions that concern them. The grants are disbursed by the United Nations Office at Geneva, usually in August. The recipients must submit by 30 November at the latest narrative and financial reports and a satisfactory auditor's report on the use of the funds. If there is no final report by 30 November, an interim report is requested by that date, with the final report to be received by the following 15 February. No new grant request will be accepted while a report on the use of a previous grant remains outstanding.

E. Admissibility criteria

5. Project admissibility criteria are outlined in the Fund's guidelines. To be admissible, a project must be submitted by a non-governmental organization; the beneficiaries must be victims of torture as defined in article 1 of the United Nations Declaration on Protection of All Persons from Being Subjected to Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. Priority is given to projects providing direct assistance to torture victims. This could consist of medical or psychological assistance, help with social or economic reintegration through vocational training for victims, or legal assistance for compensation for victims or members of their family. As available funds permit, the Fund can finance projects to organize training programmes, seminars or conferences to allow health care professionals or others who provide direct assistance to torture victims to exchange good practices. However, any grant request for a project involving investigation, research, studies, publications or similar activities is not admissible. The Fund can provide emergency assistance in individual cases where no project is receiving support. This type of request is reviewed according to a specific procedure explained in the guidelines. Any new request is reviewed systematically by the secretariat with the United Nations agencies in the field and established channels of assistance.

II. Twenty-second session of the Fund's Board of Trustees

A. Organization of the work of the Board

6. At its twenty-second session, held from 12 to 28 May 2003 in the Palais Wilson in Geneva, headquarters of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Board held 26 closed meetings. During those meetings, the Board studied the analyses prepared by its secretariat concerning 249 projects. Those analyses essentially dealt with the use of grants given over previous years and new requests for grants received for projects to be funded in 2003. On the basis of those documents, the Board adopted the recommendations concerning each project that was submitted to it. As is customary, Board members met with the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mr. Sergio Vieira de Mello, and put forward the Board's financial situation and their provisional recommendations.

7. According to established practice, the board met with the Committee against Torture (see also sect. F below), heard, in closed meetings, from representatives of non-governmental organizations that had submitted a request for funding and met with a representative of the European Commission.

B. Financial situation of the Fund

8. In accordance with the United Nations rules governing voluntary contribution funds for humanitarian purposes, 15 per cent of estimated annual expenditures must be earmarked as a reserve for the following year, in the event that the amount of contributions received is insufficient, and 13 per cent is the rate set for programme support costs. After reserve and support costs were deducted from the total contributions received in time for allocation, and after adding to the new voluntary

contributions paid since the twenty-first session the 15 per cent left over from the previous year, the amount available on 12 May 2003 for allocation to new grants came to a little over $7 million against a total sum of requests amounting to $13 million.

9. The contributions recorded in time for the twenty-first session of the Board are listed in table 1.

Table 1
Contributions recorded in time for the twenty-first session*

Donors	*Amount (in United States dollars)*	*Currency of payment*	*Currency pledged*	*Date recorded*	*For the year*	*Contribution No.*
States						
Algeria	5 000			28 February 2003	2003	12
Andorra	9 680			31 October 2002	2003	9
Austria	40 000			3 March 2003	2003	20
Belgium	74 156	€75 000	SF 110 492	9 December 2002	2002	13
Canada	37 783			11 September 2002	2003	20
"	43 193			15 May 2003	2003	21
Chile	5 000			11 June 2002	2002	10
Cyprus	3 000			31 July 2002	2002	14
"	3 000			9 August 2002	2003	15
Czech Republic	5 000			9 July 2002	2002	7
Denmark	283 668		DK 2 000 000	23 April 2003	2003	21
Finland	164 207			29 October 2002	2003	21
France	90 000			13 May 2003	2003	25
"	139 935		€130 000	15 April 2003	2003	21
Germany	122 066		€130 000	11 June 2002	2002	20
Greece	10 300			30 September 2002	2002	18
Haiti	109	FS 150		23 April 2003	2003	2
Holy See	1 000			22 October 2002	2002	7
Iceland	4 650			20 February 2003	2003	17
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	10 000			1 October 2002	2002	2
Ireland	115 442			9 May 2003	2003	19
Japan	43 000			24 February 2003	2003	17
Kenya	2 500			28 May 2002	2002	6
"	5 000			12 May 2003	2003	7
Liechtenstein	7 353			3 February 2003	2003	15
Luxembourg	19 210	€17 500		20 March 2003	2003	19
Monaco	10 000			14 February 2003	2003	10
Netherlands	500 000			17 March 2003	2003	22
New Zealand	14 886	$NZ 30 000		26 June 2002	2003	17

Donors	*Amount (in United States dollars)*	*Currency of payment*	*Currency pledged*	*Date recorded*	*For the year*	*Contribution No.*
Norway	136 986			6 May 2003	2003	18
Peru	1 480	FS 2 220		5 July 2002	2002	3
Poland	5 000			10 December 2002	2002	3
Portugal	15 000			15 July 2002	2000	5
"	15 000			15 July 2002	2001	6
Republic of Korea	10 000			18 December 2002	2002	8
Saudi Arabia	10 000			5 February 2002	2003	3
South Africa	11 693			1 April 2003	2003	8
Spain	41 269		€42 071	15 November 2002	2002	17
"	5 000		€5 370	3 February 2003	2003	18
Sri Lanka	1 000			28 May 2002	2002	11
Switzerland	58 823		FS 80 000	19 February 2003	2003	16
Thailand	10 000			27 January 2003	2003	1
Tunisia	2 821			19 December 2002	2002	12
"	1 694			23 April 2003	2003	13
United Kingdom	237 043		£150 000	27 March 2003	2003	16
United States of America	5 000 000			23 May 2003	2003	23
NGOs						
Japanese Lawyers International Solidarity Association (Japan)	168	FS 230		27 March 2003	2003	1
Individuals						
Ms. Sandra Coliver (United States)	90			24 December 2002	2003	1
Mr. Sachiko Hotta (Japan)	143	FS 200		27 March 2003	2003	1
Ms. Rita Maran (United States)	50			27 June 2002	2002	13
"	50			21 March 2003	2003	14
Mr. Yorio Shiokawa (Japan)	135	FS 200		23 August 2002	2002	1
"	146	FS 200		27 March 2003	2003	2
Mr. David P. W. Solberg, President, HVAC System Technology, Inc. (United States)	125			14 January 2002	2002	1
Mr. Pedrag Zivkovic (Croatia)	72	FS 100		4 April 2003		1
Mr. Lampert (Germany)	55	€50		15 May 2003		1
Total	**7 332 981**					

* According to information available to the Office of the High Commissioner on 28 May 2003.

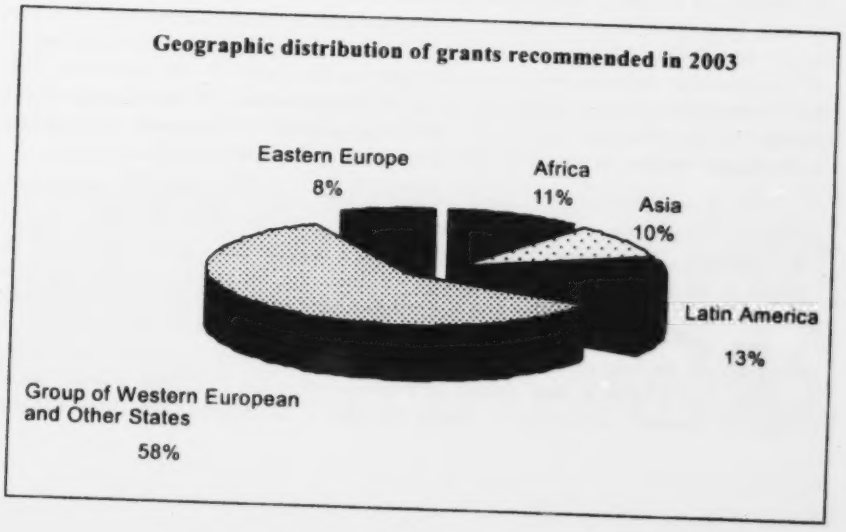
10. It should be emphasized that most of the regular donors and other donors to the Fund responded well to the appeals of the General Assembly, the Commission on Human Rights, the High Commissioner and the Board urging them to make their contributions in advance, preferably before 1 March 2003, so that they might be recorded by the Treasurer and be available at the twenty-second session of the Board.

C. Recommendations adopted by the Board concerning grants

11. Pursuant to the Board's practice, all the funds available for new grants were recommended for allocation. The available $7 million was largely earmarked for projects from all parts of the world that provide psychological, medical, legal, economic and social assistance or any other type of direct humanitarian assistance to victims of torture and their family members. Overall, new grants for 2003 were distributed to 186 projects that assist victims of torture and their family members in 68 countries throughout the world. If the pending grants recommended in 2002, for which narrative and financial reports are still due, are included, the number of countries in which projects are financed by the Fund has risen to 77. For the second straight year, for lack of available resources, the Board has been unable to recommend grants to meet requests for funding seminars on training for professionals specializing in assistance to victims. Because of page constraints it was not possible to attach the list of organizations that received grants in 2003. The list may nevertheless be obtained from the Fund's secretariat.

12. The Board recommended that about $50,000 be reserved for emergency grants that the secretariat, on the recommendation of the Chairman, may provide if the need arises before the next annual session of the Board. That reserve might be used before the Board's next session, in May 2004, to meet requests for assistance from victims of torture for urgent care in regions where there are no projects financed by the Fund and for organizations financed by the Fund which are having financial difficulties. These urgent requests for assistance will be dealt with in accordance with the relevant guidelines of the Fund approved by the Secretary-General and the General Assembly.

Figure I



13. It should be noted that whereas more than half the grants are disbursed to organizations based in countries of the Western Group, the recipients of that aid are mostly refugees or asylum-seekers from other geographic regions.

Table 2
Number of subsidized projects in 2003 by region

Region	*Number of projects*	*Amount in United States dollars*
Africa	29	761 000
Asia	20	696 000
Latin America	23	915 000
Eastern Europe	25	558 800
Western European and Other States	89	4 207 000

D. Fund-raising

1. Meeting with the European Commission

14. The Board met with the Deputy Head of Unit for Human Rights and Democratization of the European Commission, who said that, until 2001, the European Commission had been the leading donor to projects for the rehabilitation of torture victims, with an annual budget of 12 million euros which it distributed to organizations within and outside the European Union. In 2001, a European Commission communication announced a new funding policy giving priority to torture prevention activities out of a desire to tackle the problem of torture at its root.

2. Meeting with donors

15. Within the framework of the new fund-raising strategy launched at its twenty-first session, characterized by a regional, more targeted approach to donors, the Board met with ambassadors, permanent representatives to the United Nations Office at Geneva and coordinators of various regional groups. The purpose of this new approach is both to increase awareness among Governments, at a regional level, of their responsibilities to assist torture victims and to expand the number of donors to the Fund by recommending that coordinators encourage other Governments in their respective regional groups to contribute to the Fund, if only nominally. The Board also met with the Chairperson of the fifty-ninth session of the Commission on Human Rights following the Commission's appeal to all Governments to contribute to the Fund. Additional meetings were scheduled for November 2003.

16. The annual meeting of Board members with representatives of Government donors in Geneva was held in the Palais Wilson on 22 May 2003. On that occasion, the Chairman of the Board thanked the Fund's regular donors. He expressed his concern at the steady increase in requests for financing, the result of a growing need for assistance to torture victims and limited available sources of funding worldwide. He also explained to donors the European Commission's new policy of progressively shifting its focus from rehabilitation of torture victims to prevention activities. The Chairman told donors of his concern at the European policy's move towards a gradual reduction in direct assistance to victims. He drew donors'

attention to the impact of this development on organizations assisting torture victims, the victims themselves, and the Fund. The Fund would become the main source of financing worldwide for projects to provide direct assistance to victims and would have to cope with a significant increase in applications for financing.

3. Presentation of the Board's financial needs to the Commission on Human Rights

17. The Board expressed its appreciation to the Commission on Human Rights for its practice of inviting Board members to report on the Fund's financial situation and financing needs and to launch an appeal for contributions during the session of the Commission when it introduced the report of the Secretary-General on the Fund's activities. It suggested that the General Assembly should do likewise, if possible.

4. Relations with the main sources of funding for assistance to torture victims

18. In order to determine what is needed to assist torture victims, the Board encourages regular visits and informal exchanges of information between the Fund's secretariat and other major sources of funding, in particular the European Commission, the Oak Foundation and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), which provide support to non-governmental organizations in this area. It appreciated, in particular, the excellent dialogue launched between the European Commission and the Fund's secretariat. This exchange helped the Board of Trustees to understand better the new trend in the European Commission's policy on funding projects to assist torture victims.

E. Cooperation with other United Nation bodies working on the question of torture

19. Board members met with the Chairman of the Committee against Torture and the Special Rapporteur on the question of torture and discussed the text of the joint statement to be issued on 26 June 2003, on the occasion of the United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture. The Board recommended that the Office of the High Commissioner schedule and organize its next session in May 2003 to coincide with that of the Committee against Torture in order to continue this sound practice.

F. Cooperation with other organizations of the United Nations

20. Throughout the intersessional period (May 2002 to May 2003), the Fund's secretariat continued to cooperate in the field with the Office of the High Commissioner and other United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, in particular the United Nations Development Programme, in transmitting information to or from the heads of Fund-financed projects, carrying out on-site project assessments or monitoring the use of grants. The Board recommended that the High Commissioner, in his capacity as coordinator of the human rights activities of the United Nations system, should, where necessary, seek cooperation from the heads of UNHCR field offices, United Nations resident coordinators or heads of any other United Nations organizations, funds or programmes. Their cooperation is particularly useful in paying grants or evaluating Fund-financed projects. For example, it enabled the secretariat and the Board of Trustees to obtain detailed

evaluations of a number of projects, particularly in Africa, and to explore modalities for effecting secure bank transfers in Latin America.

G. Visits to projects by the Fund's secretariat

21. The Board greatly appreciated the on-site visits made by the Fund's secretariat between May 2002 and May 2003 in order to ensure that the grants awarded were being used in conformity with the Fund's guidelines. These visits also provided an opportunity to give recipient organizations a more detailed explanation of the Fund's requirements with regard to narrative, financial and audit reports on the use of grants, and to answer their questions. Members of the secretariat visited projects in Germany (Berlin), Argentina, Chile, the United States of America (New York) and Kosovo (Serbia and Montenegro). The Board recommended continuing this practice in order to enable the secretariat to visit some projects every year. Expenses for these visits are charged against the Fund as programme support costs. A confidential report on each visit is reviewed by the Board of Trustees during its session.

H. United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, 26 June 2003

22. The General Assembly, in its resolution 52/149 of 12 December 1997, proclaimed 26 June the United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture. In accordance with an initiative taken by the Board in May 1998 in order to commemorate the Day, the Board of Trustees of the Fund, the Committee against Torture, the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on the question of torture and the High Commissioner for Human Rights issued a joint statement addressed to interested States and organizations. On that occasion, works of art by torture victims, a generous gift to the Fund by recipient organizations, were on display at the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights from 26 June to 15 August 2003.

I. Manual on the Effective Investigation and Documentation of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

23. The Board welcomed the revision of the Manual on the Effective Investigation and Documentation of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, published as part of the Professional Training Series of the Office of the High Commissioner and partially financed by the Fund. It recommended that a paragraph on the Fund be included in the latest edition of the Manual.

J. Secretariat of the Fund and the Board

24. The Board supports the request formulated by the General Assembly and the Commission on Human Rights in their most recent resolutions on the question of torture (resolutions 57/200 and 2003/32, respectively), by which the Secretary-General is asked to "ensure, within the overall budgetary framework of the United

Nations, the provision of an adequate and stable level of staffing, as well as the necessary technical facilities, for the bodies and mechanisms involved in combating torture and assisting victims of torture, in order to ensure their effective performance commensurate with the strong support expressed by Member States for combating torture and assisting victims of torture". The Board thus recommends that sufficient personnel should be assigned to the Fund's secretariat and that the necessary material, equipment and services should be available for the smooth operation of the Fund.

III. Trends

25. The Fund's secretariat is requesting grant-aided organizations to provide it with data on the number of victims assisted, gender and age distribution of the victims and kind of grant assistance given by the Fund. The data supplied on the number of assisted victims are not necessarily complete given that some organizations do not always include the required statistics in their reports. Furthermore, the number of victims put forward by organizations should include direct victims and their relatives who have received assistance from the Fund, which is not always the case. In some cases, the statistics refer to the total number of victims assisted by all the project's donors and not only the number of victims who have received assistance from the Fund alone. The fact that the data on the number of victims is not always complete prevents the secretariat from identifying trends with complete accuracy.

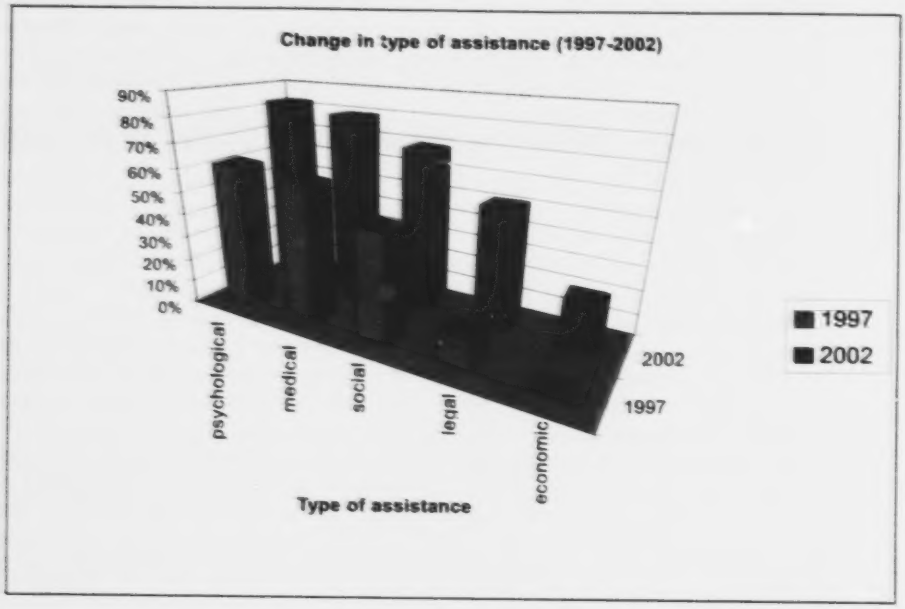
A. Victims

26. On the basis of information compiled by the secretariat from narrative reports submitted by grant-aided organizations, the trends singled out in the previous General Assembly report (A/57/268) were confirmed. As in 2001, 54 per cent of the victims who received assistance in 2002 were men and 46 per cent were women. Eighty-six per cent of the victims were adults (between 18 and 60 years of age), 6 per cent were children and 8 per cent were elderly people. These percentages include victims of torture and their family.

B. Type of assistance and its impact

27. The type of victim assistance provided by organizations which receive grants from the Fund is determined by the General Assembly and the Secretary-General on the recommendation of the Board. Such assistance consists mainly of psychological, medical, social, legal and economic assistance. The percentage of projects providing one or more specific types of assistance to victims of torture increased markedly between 1997 and 2002: from 61 per cent to 82 per cent for psychological assistance; from 58 per cent to 79 per cent for medical assistance; from 46 per cent to 69 per cent for social assistance; from 13 per cent to 51 per cent for legal assistance and from 0 to 20 per cent for economic assistance (see figure 2). Requests for assistance considered at the twenty-second session confirm both this trend and the increase in the number of projects providing direct multidisciplinary assistance to victims of torture and their relatives.

Figure 2



1. Psychological assistance

28. The majority of organizations financed by the Fund (87 per cent in 2002) provide psychological assistance to victims designed to help them to overcome the psychological trauma that they have experienced. This type of assistance is supported by various kinds of therapies. Individual therapy, whether based on clinical, psychoanalytical, behavioural or other care, is essentially designed to enable the victim to step back from the trauma, learn to identify and accept it and gradually become reintegrated into society and/or the working world. Psychiatric support, together with drug treatment, is frequently offered to patients suffering emotional collapse. Psychologists and psychiatrists are quite often specialists in the treatment of torture victims and post-traumatic stress management. That expertise enables them to gain the victims' trust and to respond appropriately to their particular symptoms. Alongside these forms of individual therapy, many organizations also offer family or group therapy on a case-by-case basis. Aside from their significant cathartic effect, by allowing victims to share their painful experiences with other people with a similar history, such therapies also serve a social purpose, enabling the victim to restore ties that are quite often severed by an array of clinical symptoms caused by being tortured.

29. One important aspect of any therapeutic work with victims of torture is that it is generally a long-term undertaking. Indeed, the psychological aftermath of the trauma continues to affect torture victims throughout their lives. A torture victim is never cured psychologically, however good the treatment he receives. It is more appropriate to speak of improving the victim's condition through the means that he is given to cope with the trauma and be able to live with it. Although the frequency

of the sessions can vary and decrease over time, victims often relapse at a specific time in their lives. An emotional collapse can occur as a result of something that reminds him of the trauma and the setting in which it occurred, such as an event in the victim's daily life, a news item or symbolic date.

2. Medical assistance

30. In second place, after psychological assistance, medical assistance constitutes the most common form of aid provided by organizations financed by the Fund (79 per cent in 2002). The assistance is designed to treat the physical after-effects of torture. After the first diagnosis is made by a general practitioner and the symptoms resulting from the torture undergone are determined, treatment is generally provided by specialists (in the fields of accident and emergency services, surgery, orthopaedics, neurology, dermatology, gynaecology, urology, etc.). Initial care is often accompanied by paramedical treatment (physiotherapy, nursing assistance). Such assistance is provided either directly by organizations financed by the Fund or through partner health-care organizations and professionals to whom patients are referred, with the organization covering the expenses related to treatment (as well as transportation in certain cases). Sometimes, the assistance merely helps victims survive by meeting their urgent medical needs and limiting further damage to their state of health. In the long term, some conditions can be corrected only through continued and regular medical follow-up.

3. Social assistance

31. Social assistance, the third type of support for victims (51 per cent), complements the two above-mentioned types by enabling victims, through various approaches, to end the marginalized state in which many find themselves, a factor that exacerbates the psychological after-effects from which they are already suffering. Social assistance ensures victims a minimum of facilities allowing them to survive in a society with which they sometimes no longer have a connection. Such assistance can consist, inter alia, of professional training designed to give victims a specialty of their choice (computer science, sewing, secretarial work, mechanics and others), subsequently giving them the opportunity to find employment again. Sometimes, a specific category of victims is targeted, for example women tortured in a prison setting, and their needs are identified through a participatory process. Micro-projects are then developed with the help of social workers, to enable such women, once they are released from prison, to engage in activities that meet previously identified needs. Such micro-projects include, for example, short-term training courses or the establishment of an income-generating project. Such assistance has also been shown to play an essential therapeutic role, enabling victims to regain confidence in their abilities and recover their human dignity. Social assistance can also take the form of aid to elderly and handicapped people affected by torture that they have undergone, by easing access to social services, referring them to charitable institutions or providing them with home care.

4. Legal assistance

32. This kind of assistance increased from 13 to 51 per cent in five years. It has several aspects. In the case of torture victims seeking asylum, it helps in establishing the files required by the host country's authorities to obtain refugee status and in following up their applications, through the highest national authorities dealing with

asylum issues. The activities of legal advisers of grant-assisted organizations also help to promote the social and family rights of the applicants.

33. Generally, Fund assistance contributes to combating impunity by seeking reparation and compensation for victims through legal representation of victims before the competent national, regional and international authorities. The Fund's grants can cover the costs of lawyers, courts, translations and procedure. In practice, the impact of this assistance is reflected in specific compensatory measures such as rehabilitation, disability benefits and financial compensation.

5. Financial assistance

34. One fifth of the organizations also provide victims with direct or indirect financial assistance in addition to other kinds of assistance offered. In the very poorest regions, financial aid quite often enables the victims to gain easier access to other types of assistance when their basic needs for survival are partly met. The approaches are very diverse and adapted to local conditions, and meet very different needs. In some cases, assistance is distributed in the form of nominal amounts that allow unemployed victims to cover their own and their relatives' basic needs (such as food, clothing and housing). In other cases, the financial assistance helps to pay the school costs of victims' children, or of victims themselves when they are unable to work as a result of the serious physical and psychological aftermath of torture, as well as a modest daily food ration during the school year. Indirect financial assistance can also include reimbursing the travel costs of victims for regular trips to receive medical or psychological care or for relatives of torture victims to visit them in the places where they are being held. Finally, other forms of financial assistance that some victims receive include ad hoc donations in kind (such as food, utensils, tools and clothing) and income-generating projects run directly by the victims.

C. Conclusions

35. The first projects financed by the fund especially addressed the immediate needs of torture victims, essentially by providing them with medical and psychological assistance. A trend that aims to offer them holistic assistance has subsequently emerged. In fact, many projects are taking a multidisciplinary approach, combining the five various types of assistance mentioned above. These types of assistance are interdependent and mutually reinforcing, when they are jointly offered, in terms of their impact on the victims' lives, responding to the multifaceted nature of the effects of torture on the individual. For example, obtaining reparation for violations undergone has a very important psychological effect for the victims. Conversely, testifying to obtain reparation can have a significant destabilizing effect, with the possibility of an emotional collapse requiring sustained psychological attention. Moreover, social assistance, together with specific kinds of specialized therapies, such as occupational therapy, has both a psychological and economic impact on victims by enabling them to rebuild their self-confidence while developing new skills and meeting their relatives' material needs. Financial assistance, for its part, is sometimes connected with medical assistance when it is used to purchase medicines for the treatment of victims.

D. Lessons and good practices

36. In accordance with Commission on Human Rights resolution 2003/32, adopted at its fifty-ninth session, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has initiated an independent evaluation, in accordance with United Nations rules and regulations, of the functioning of the Fund, including in particular the lessons and best practices learned from the Fund's activities with a view to further enhancing its effectiveness. Steps have been taken to establish terms of reference for its implementation.

37. In the framework of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Fund, the Board recommended that the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights publish a book containing testimony from recipients of Fund assistance (torture victims, health professionals, lawyers and social workers) and contributions from former or current members of the Board of Trustees. Such testimony, from people involved for many years in providing assistance to torture victims with support from the Fund, will help bring to light the considerable work that has been accomplished over time through the Fund, donors and organizations and to measure its impact.

IV. Preparations for the twenty-third session of the Board

A. Estimated needs for 2004

38. The amount of grant requests received this year ($13 million) exceeded the 2002 amount by $1 million. Trends of past years show that each year the total amount of grant requests increases by at least $1 million over the previous year.

B. Contributions to the Fund

39. Given the comments in the preceding paragraph, donors are encouraged to contribute to the Fund before 1 March 2004, as recommended in the latest resolutions of the General Assembly (57/200) and the Commission on Human Rights (2003/32). It is advisable that contributions be paid in advance so that they might be recorded by the Treasurer. It is the Board's practice, at its first meeting of every annual session, to take into account only money that is actually available in recommending new grants and therefore only contributions for which an official receipt has been issued. Most donors pay voluntary contributions to the Fund directly, without pledging in advance. The Board cannot take pledges into account.

C. How to make a contribution to the Fund

40. Contributions to the Fund should always be marked as follows: "payee: United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture, account CH". Payments may be made either by bank transfer: (a) in United States dollars or in other currencies to "United Nations Geneva General Fund", account No. 485001802, J.P. Morgan Chase Bank, New York, N.Y. 10004, U.S.A. (Swift code: CHASUS33); (b) in euros and pounds sterling to "United Nations Office at Geneva", account No. 23961901, J. P. Morgan Chase Bank, London, P.O. Box 440, Wollgate House, Coleman Street, London, United Kingdom (Swift code: CHASGB2L); (c) in Swiss francs to "United

Nations Geneva General Fund", account No. 240-C0590160.0, UBS, rue du Rhône 8, Geneva 2, Switzerland (Swift code: UBSWCHZH12A); (d) or by cheque payable to "United Nations" addressed to: Trésorerie, Nations Unies, Palais des Nations, CH-1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland. Donors are requested to inform the secretariat of the Fund and the Resource Mobilization Unit when a payment has been made (a copy of the bank transfer order or of the cheque would be appreciated) to facilitate effective follow-up on the official recording procedure and preparation of the Secretary-General's reports.

D. Dates of the twenty-third session of the Board

41. The Board recommended that the next session should take place from 10 to 27 May 2004 so that it coincides with the session of the Committee against Torture. The Board appreciated the attention that the High Commissioner gave to the Fund's activities at its meeting of 22 May 2003 and recommended that a new meeting be held with him at its twenty-third session. Guidelines, grant applications and all other documentation relating to the Fund can be downloaded from the web page on the Fund at the following address: http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu2/9/vftortur.htm. To contact the secretariat of the Fund, please use the following e-mail address: unvfvt@ohchr.org.

V. Conclusions and recommendations

42. **In accordance with appeals by the General Assembly, the Commission on Human Rights, the High Commissioner and the Board of Trustees, all Governments, organizations and individuals in a position to do so are urged to contribute to the Fund every year, preferably by 1 March, before the annual Board meeting, and appreciably increase their donations, if possible, to meet the ever-increasing demand for assistance.**